



UTAH'S FIRST FREE SCHOOL—American Fork has the honor of being the first town to sponsor a school entirely supported by taxes. It was the first school in Utah that was free to all children. The above monument commemorating this school was erected by the Adams and American Fork

American Fork Credited With First Free School

(Submitted By Relva B. Ross)

To the city of American Fork goes the credit of being the first locality to take advantage of the Utah Territorial legislative act of 1866 authorizing a tax levy to support schools. Promoter of the first free school in Utah was Mayor Leonard E. Harrington.

As mayor of American Fork, Mr. Harrington called a meeting of citizens in the fall of 1866 to discuss the possibility of a free school supported by a tax to be

levied within the district. A member of the committee that sponsored the bill in the Legislature met with the town people and a heated discussion developed into a final vote to defeat the proposal.

Children of today would probably have sighed with relief at the news, but the fighting citizens of American Fork continued to push the measure in the town. A later meeting was called, forces were more strongly organized and this time the

vote was a tie. Mayor Harrington, chairman of the meeting, cast the deciding vote in favor of the tax and the first school tax was underway.

In November, 1867, this free school was opened with Joseph B. Forbes, Eugene A. Henroid, Editha Anderson and Elizabeth G. Griffiths as teachers. The board of trustees consisted of William Greenwood, James W. Preston and William Paxman.

On August 6, 1939, the Adams and American Fork Camps of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers dedicated their monument which had been erected in the City Park in commemoration of the establishment of this school, free to all children.

That's how it was, and now you kids know who to thank for Utah's first school.